SESSION

RedRover K-12 HR & PAYROLL LEADERSHIP FORUM

Breaking the Silos: How Leading Districts Align HR & Payroll



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Breaking the Silo: Getting your HR & Payroll teams to work together

A practical operating model for shared processes, clear ownership, and better communication

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Today's conversation

Three districts. One shared challenge. No slides full of theory — just what actually worked.

1 **Why this topic**

HR and Payroll operate as one service in the eyes of every employee, whether the org chart says so or not.

2 **What you'll hear**

Real stories, real tools, and a few hard-won lessons from three districts that took this on directly.

Three districts, three vantage points

TL

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27 years in education — 22 in HR, HRIS & school support

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West York Area School District, PA

Leads HR operations and cross-team coordination

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Manages the Payroll side of a formal, tiered HR–Payroll communication structure

SESSION OUTCOMES

Learning objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. **Identify**
   at least three common causes of breakdowns between HR and Payroll teams.

2. **Analyze**
   an HR–Payroll process by distinguishing its trigger, owner, inputs, handoff, control, and close.

3. **Map**
   one employee lifecycle event and identify where communication or ownership gaps exist.

4. **Evaluate**
   whether current communication methods, calendars, and meetings support effective collaboration.

5. **Apply**
   a practical operating model with shared governance, communication protocols, and recurring forums.

6. **Develop**
   one actionable improvement to strengthen HR and Payroll collaboration within 30 days.

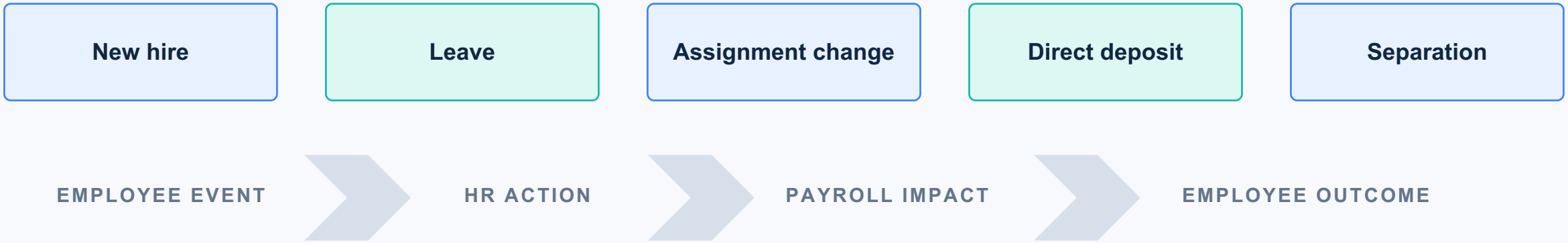
Different organizations, common collaboration problems

District structures vary, but the operational consequences are familiar.

1	**Different systems**	HRIS, Substitute Systems, Applicant Systems
2	**Different sized district**	Are you a one-person operation or one contributor in a large system?
3	**Different organizational models**	Is benefits in HR or Payroll? Do you have one person who oversees both HR & Payroll?
4	**Different calendars**	Do you pay monthly, biweekly, weekly?
5	**Different communication practices**	Conflicting employee information

The employee experiences one organization

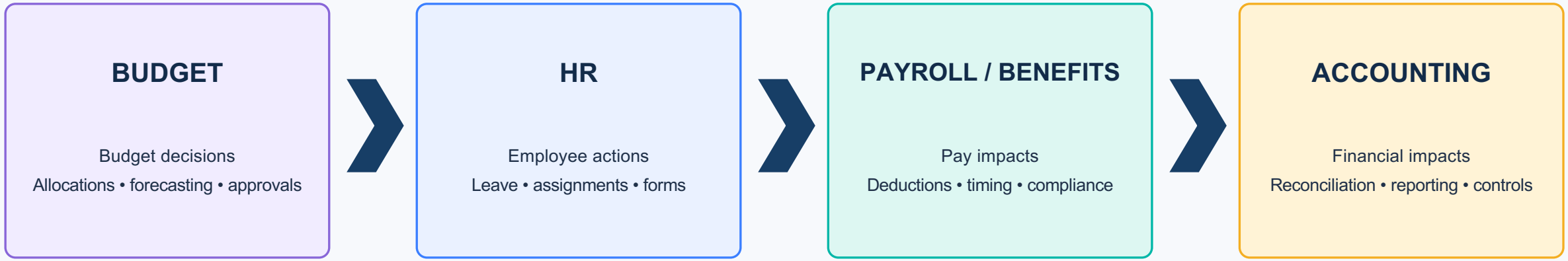
Departmental boundaries are internal. Employees experience the combined result.



Employees do not experience the handoff. They experience whether the outcome is accurate, timely, and clearly communicated.

Work moves downstream

Every handoff affects another team. Upstream decisions shape downstream accuracy.

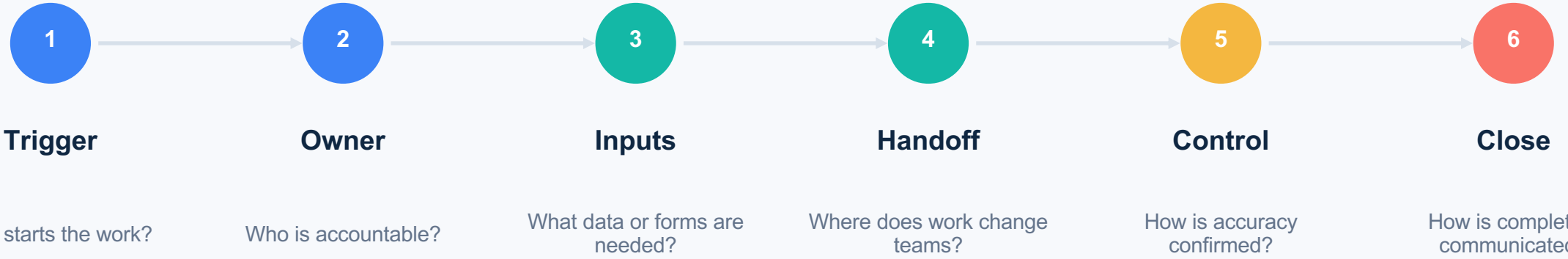


The goal is not to eliminate handoffs. It is to make them visible, owned, and predictable.

But remains Invisible to the Employee.

Identify and define the process

Before improving a workflow, agree on the current-state path.



If a process is difficult to explain, it will be difficult to execute consistently.

Small handoffs, significant downstream impact

Two examples show why ownership, documentation, and timely communication matter.

01 Direct Deposits

HR	Provides the Direct Deposit Form during employee orientation.
HR	Scans the form into the shared HR/payroll folder.
HR	Places the original in a folder for payroll verification.
PAYROLL	Enters the information in the HR/payroll system.
PAYROLL	Processes all subsequent direct deposit changes.

02 Death of an Employee

HR	Contacts the family and explains the district process.
HR	Contacts Payroll/Benefits.
PAY/BEN	Communicates with the family thereafter.
PAY/BEN	Obtains the death certificate.
PAY/BEN	Works with the insurance company or companies.
PAYROLL	Tells HR the date to end pay.
HR	Ends the pay screen and sends the employee to the Board.
PAYROLL	Processes a separate pay warrant for the family.

OPERATING RHYTHM

Build one shared yearly calendar

Turn recurring deadlines into a visible operating cadence.

Month	Electronic Workbook & Sub Office Due	Satellites & Extracts Pulled	Due to Payroll TO Approvals	Sub Office/Payroll Extract Make Attend Error Review	Retro Run/HR Prelim Tags	Preliminary Payroll date	HR Reconciliation Day	Payroll Reconciliation Day	Final Payroll order date	DP & Prelist/Ach Transmittal EFT	Accouting Submittal/AP Batches/ Monthly Numbers	EO/Email To Employees	PayDay	Supplemental Run	Supplemental Pay
September	2nd	4th	4th	30th	11th-Acrual Sept Payroll	15th	18th	21st	22nd-23rd	24th	25th	28th	30th	4th	15th
October	2nd	6th	6th	30th	13th	14th	20th	21st	22nd-23rd	26th	27th	28th	30th	8th	15th
November	3rd	5th	5th	30th	10th	12th	16th	17th	18th-19th	20th	23rd	24th	30th	6th	13th
December	2nd	4th	4th	30th	9th	10th	14th	15th	16th-17th	18th	21st	28th	30th	8th	15th
January	5th	7th	7th	29th	13th	14th	19th	20th	21st-22nd	25th	26th	27th	29th	8th	15th
February	2nd	4th	4th	26th	10th	11th	16th	17th	18th-19th	22nd	23rd	24th	26th	5th	12th
March	2nd	4th	4th	31st	12th	15th	19th	22nd	23rd-24th	25th	26th	29th	31st	5th	12th
April	2nd	6th	6th	30th	12th	13th	20th	21st	22nd-23rd	26th	27th	28th	30th	7th	15th
May	4th	6th	6th	28th	12th	13th	18th	19th	20th-21st	24th	25th	26th	28th	7th	14th
June	2nd	4th	4th	30th	10th	11th	17th	21st	22nd-23rd	24th	25th	28th	30th	8th	15th

Best practice: maintain one source of truth with owners, due dates, dependencies, and escalation points.

Build one shared payroll calendar

Turn recurring deadlines into a visible operating cadence.

ESSEX WESTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
2026-2027 Payroll Schedule
NOTE: Red payroll date indicates a short work week with an EWSD or bank holiday
8/19/26 Teacher First Day NOTE: Green payroll dates indicate a Monday bank holiday and taxes will need to post on Friday
8/28/26 First Teacher Paycheck

											FT 12 Month		Teacher	Support	Teacher	Support															
						# of PAYS REMAINING					6	4	2	0	U	U															
FT 12 Month	Teachers	School Yr	Payroll Date	Period From	Period Thru	FT 12 Month	Teacher 26	Teacher/ SY 22	Pay Groups	Deduction Frequency	Deductions 26	Insurance 24	Insurance 22	Insurance 20	Teacher Union Dues	Support Union Dues	Cell Phone Stipends	Wellness Stipends	Cash-in-lieu Full Time School Year Staff	Cash-in-lieu Full Time 12 Month Staff	Cash-in-lieu Teachers	SY Co-Curr.	Mentor	Fall Coach	Winter Coach	Spring Coach	Fall Drama	Winter Drama	Spring Drama	Longevity
1			07-02-2026	06-14-2026	06-27-2026	25			A,P	B,E,R,4,6	X	X					X			X										X
2			07-17-2026	06-28-2026	07-11-2026	24			A	B,E,R,4,6	X	X								X										X
3			07-31-2026	07-12-2026	07-25-2026	23			A	B,E,R,6	X									X										X
4			08-14-2026	07-26-2026	08-08-2026	22			A,P	B,E,R,4,6	X	X					X			X										X
5	1	1	08-28-2026	08-09-2026	08-22-2026	21	25	21	A,T,U	B,E,R,2,4,6	X	X	X							X	X									X
6	2	2	09-11-2026	08-23-2026	09-05-2026	20	24	20	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X			X						X
7	3	3	09-25-2026	09-06-2026	09-19-2026	19	23	19	A,T,U	B,E,R,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X					X	X	X						X			X
8	4	4	10-09-2026	09-20-2026	10-03-2026	18	22	18	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X									X
9	5	5	10-23-2026	10-04-2026	10-17-2026	17	21	17	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X						X
10	6	6	11-06-2026	10-18-2026	10-31-2026	16	20	16	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X						X			X
11	7	7	11-20-2026	11-01-2026	11-14-2026	15	19	15	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X									X
12	8	8	12-04-2026	11-15-2026	11-28-2026	14	18	14	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X									X
13	9	9	12-18-2026	11-29-2026	12-12-2026	13	17	13	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X					X
14	10	10	12-31-2026	12-13-2026	12-26-2026	12	16	12	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,6	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X									X
15	11	11	01-15-2027	12-27-2026	01-09-2027	11	15	11	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X							X		X
16	12	12	01-29-2027	01-10-2027	01-23-2027	10	14	10	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X									X
17	13	13	02-12-2027	01-24-2027	02-06-2027	9	13	9	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X					X
18	14	14	02-26-2027	02-07-2027	02-20-2027	8	12	8	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X									X
19	15	15	03-12-2027	02-21-2027	03-06-2027	7	11	7	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X							X		X
20	16	16	03-26-2027	03-07-2027	03-20-2027	6	10	6	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X									X
21	17	17	04-09-2027	03-21-2027	04-03-2027	5	9	5	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X					X			X	X
22	18	18	04-23-2027	04-04-2027	04-17-2027	4	8	4	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X									X
23	19	19	05-07-2027	04-18-2027	05-01-2027	3	7	3	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X									X
24	20	20	05-21-2027	05-02-2027	05-15-2027	2	6	2	A,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X								X	X
25	21	21	06-04-2027	05-16-2027	05-29-2027	1	5	1	A,P,T,U	B,E,R,U,0,2,4,6	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X				X
26		22	06-17-2027	05-30-2027	06-12-2027	0		0	U	B,E,R,2,4,6	X	X	X - 1st						X	X	X									X
26	22-26		06-17-2027	05-30-2027	06-12-2027		4-0		A,T	B,E,R,2,4,6																				
							23-26 Teacher Summer Pays			B,E,R																					

Best practice: Be transparent with staff and employees when and what they should expect bi-weekly.

The right conversation, at the right level

One district's model for matching the conversation to the decision it needs to support.



Every meeting should end with a decision, an owner, a due date, or a documented escalation.

Create an information ecosystem

Beyond meetings — the everyday systems that keep information moving.

Shared workflow / database

A home-grown or HRIS-based system that routes HR information to Payroll automatically

Project checklists

Recurring checklists for every pay cycle, fiscal year-end, and calendar year-end

Shared procedure docs

Written procedures both teams can access — not tribal knowledge

Communication log

A record of corrections, decisions, and status updates outside of memory or inboxes

Do not rely on memory or individual inboxes as the operating system.

CHALLENGES

Plan for the predictable friction

Collaboration becomes durable when teams design for turnover, communication gaps, and disagreement.

TURNOVER

Knowledge leaves with people unless processes are documented.

TRAINING

New employees need role context, not just task steps.

CROSS-DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION

Information must move before the deadline does.

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

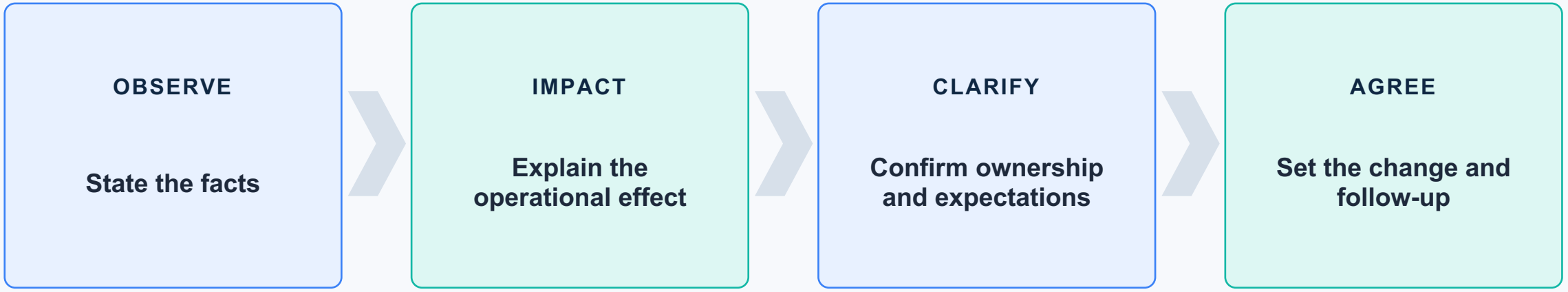
Unclear boundaries and recurring failures require direct discussion.

Which of these causes the most friction in your organization?

LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

Be willing to have the hard conversation

Address the process problem directly while preserving the working relationship.



Direct does not have to mean adversarial. The goal is clarity, accountability, and a better process.

TAKEAWAYS

Five practices that bring teams together

1	**Map it**	Make the current process visible.
2	**Own it**	Name the accountable role at each stage.
3	**Schedule it**	Use weekly and monthly forums intentionally.
4	**Document it**	Maintain calendars, folders, and communication logs.
5	**Address it**	Have direct conversations before issues compound.

Make the implicit, explicit.

What are you going to do next?

My first collaboration improvement

- Process I will address:
- Current breakdown:
- Other team or role I need to involve:
- Ownership or handoff that needs clarification:
- One change I will propose:
- My first next step:
- When I will begin:

THANK YOU

HR + Payroll works best as one employee service.

Keep the conversation going.

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THANK YOU

Thank you for joining us

Alignment doesn’t start with new software. It starts with a shared calendar, a shared goal, and a standing conversation.

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UP NEXT

Compliance & Culture in a Complex K-12 Workforce

1:25 – 2:00 PM EST



Carey Beth Harry
Indian Prairie



Erica Christmas
Clarksville Montgomery



Cassie Thompson
Red Rover